

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 10 and 15-18 are now pending in the application. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy extended during a phone conversation on 23/Mar/06. Claims 1, 6 and 15 have been amended. Support for the amendments may be found in the Applicant's specification and drawings as originally filed. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Veith (U.S. Pat. No. 3,740,072) in view of Racina (U.S. Pat. No. 3,028,617). This rejection is respectfully traversed. In the most recent Office Action, The Examiner has noted that claim 6 "does not exclude that hinge is disposed on *only* the lower portion". Applicant notes that claim 6 has been amended to reflect the Examiners Comment. More specifically, claim 6 has been amended to recite "a hinge disposed entirely on said lower portion". Applicant has also amended claim 6 to recite additional structure of the mounting arm. Specifically, claim 6 has been amended to recite "said mounting arm defines a stepped portion extending perpendicularly between and integrally formed with said lower portion and said upper portion". Further, claim 6 has been amended to recite "wherein said hinge is disposed on said lower portion a distance offset from said stepped portion".

Applicant submits that Veith alone or in combination with Racina fails to teach or suggest such a feature. Veith discloses a hinge formed with both the main body 14

(vertical section) and the plate 19 (lower horizontal portion). Specifically, ears 16 formed on the main body 14 align with opening 18 formed on the plate 19 to collectively define a hinge. In contrast, the present invention, as claimed, provides a hinge formed entirely on the lower portion. Moreover, the connection between the main body 14 and the plate 19 of Veith is provided by the hinge. In contrast, the present invention provides a stepped portion integrally formed with the lower portion and the upper portion. In addition, the hinge, as claimed in the instant invention is disposed on said lower portion a distance offset from said stepped portion. Applicant maintains that the configuration of the present invention provides a simpler, more robust configuration over Veith.

As a result, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-5 and 15-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Veith (U.S. Pat. No. 3,740,072) in view of Racina (U.S. Pat. No. 3,028,617) in further view of MacDonald (U.S. Pat. No. 6,530,105). This rejection is respectfully traversed. The Examiner has noted in the most recent Office Action that "MacDonald discloses a shoe cleaner to be mounted on a golf cart frame or bumper via a mounting bracket". The Examiner further states "The mounting bracket (50) is considered to be a "hitch receiver" and it further defines an aperture (unlabeled, see Figure 2) so that a coupling element (such as any of the fasteners disclosed) couples a mounting arm (14) to a "hitch receiver" (Column 4 Lines 4 – 19)".

Applicant notes that claims 1 and 15 have been amended to recite "a hitch receiver disposed on an underside of a bumper ... a coupling element coupling said

mounting arm of said frame to the hitch receiver of the vehicle such that said mounting arm of said frame locates entirely under said bumper".

Applicant respectfully submits that MacDonald, alone or in combination with Veith and/or Racina, does not teach or suggest a hitch receiver disposed on an underside of a bumper and a coupling element coupling the mounting arm of the frame to the hitch receiver of the vehicle such that the mounting arm of the frame locates entirely under the bumper. MacDonald at best provides a bracket for wrapping around a bumper. The mounting bracket 50 of MacDonald cannot be considered a hitch receiver on the rear of the vehicle. Rather, the mounting bracket 50 is simply a bracket for mounting to a vehicle bumper.

The mounting bracket 50 is configured with a gap 62 sufficient to mount around a bumper of a golf car (see e.g. Col. 3, Lines 65 – 67). The present invention provides a simple and convenient apparatus for utilizing a hitch receiver provided on an underside of a bumper. MacDonald specifically teaches away from the present invention. Not only does MacDonald not disclose or suggest a hitch receiver on a vehicle, but the complicated bracket 50 of MacDonald is provided as a solution for applications where no hitch receiver is provided on the vehicle. As a result, the bracket 50 is used to wrap around the bumper. MacDonald specifically describes the bracket 50 as having a first leg 52, a second leg 54, a third leg 56 and preferably a fourth leg 60. The fasteners 66 and 68 are disposed vertically and adjust the vertical grip on the bumper. Emphasis added. Col. 4, Lines 10 – 12. In sum, MacDonald does not teach or suggest a hitch receiver disposed on an underside of a bumper ... a coupling element coupling said

mounting arm of said frame to the hitch receiver of the vehicle such that said mounting arm of said frame locates entirely under said bumper.


As a result, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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